

Serial No.: 09/683,381
Attorney Docket No.: F-442

Patent

REMARKS

1. Status of Claims

Claims 1-8 were pending in the Application. Applicants have amended claims 1-8 and added new claims 9-17. Applicants respectfully requests entry of the above amendments and consideration of the enclosed remarks. Applicants submit that no new matter is added. Accordingly, claims 1-17 will remain pending in the application.

2. Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's request in section 1 of the Office Action for an Information Disclosure Statement. Applicants intend to file an information disclosure statement in this application.

3. Objections to the Drawings

In sections 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings. Applicants have provided a Request for Approval of Corrected Drawings under separate cover.

Applicants have amended the specification paragraph 68 as suggested to show reference numerals 504, 505. Accordingly, no changes to the drawings are proposed for those objections.

In FIG. 5B, Applicants propose changing reference "D" to "F", reference "B" to "C" and reference "C" to "D" in order to be consistent with FIGs. 5C and 5D. Applicants have amended paragraph 46 accordingly.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

4. Claim Objections

In section 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the claim numbering supplied by the USPTO Electronic Filing System. The Examiner objected to claims 4-8 as having inconsistent statutory claim types. Applicants have amended claims 1-8 for purely cosmetic reasons to address the objections. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

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5. Rejections under 35 USC § 112

In section 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Applicants respectfully submit that the specification and claims as originally filed fully enable original claims 1-8. Applicants have amended claims 1-8 for cosmetic reasons and submit that amended claims 1-8 also satisfy 35 U.S.C. section 112, first paragraph.

The examiner submits that "not every mail is processed by a postage meter or equivalent automated machine" and that "handwritten address and information on the mail may not be scanned by the conventional OCR or other scanner." Applicants respectfully submit that the statements are not relevant to the claims and not accurate.

Without admitting that the rejection has foundation, Applicants respectfully submit that known OCR systems may process handwriting. Furthermore, the claims do not require successfully OCR processing each mail piece. The claims are not limited to using an OCR process. Sender and recipient information is not limited to OCR data. The specification and claims as originally filed describe enabling genus and species of elements. For example, scanning alternatives that include scanning the entire face of the document so as to provide an image used in processing are described. Scans and handwriting analysis samples are also described. Meter number identifiers are also described. See for example paragraphs 65, 67, 70, and 71. See for example claims 1, 3.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the invention as presently claimed in claims 1-8 satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. section 112.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

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In section 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-2 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 112 as allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 8 in order to broaden the claims and respectfully submit that amended claims 1 and 8 satisfy 35 U.S.C. section 112, second paragraph. Claim 2 depends from claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1-2 and 8.

6. Rejections under 35 USC § 102

In section 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Sansone (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0141613A1).

Should the rejection be maintained, Applicants reserve the right to provide additional evidence such as that under 37 C.F.R. sections 1.131 and 1.132.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

However, solely in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite "a plurality of detectors each including a contaminant detection hazard detector for triggering a mail piece quarantine indication." Applicants have amended claim 3 to recite "testing the mail piece for hazards to determine an initial mail piece quarantine condition." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the reference does not fairly teach or suggest the invention as presently claimed.

Claims 2 and 4-8 depend directly or indirectly from the respective independent claims and are patentable over the cited reference for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is moot and request early and favorable consideration of the invention as presently claimed in claims 18.

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Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to claims 1-8.

7. Rejections under 35 USC § 103

In section 12 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly rendered obvious by Pintsov (EP 1063602) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,440,136 to Gomberg ("Gomberg '136").

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has not put forth a prima facie rejection. For example, the references are not properly combined. The references cited are non-analogous art and one of skill in the art would not look to Gomberg '136 to modify Pintsov. Furthermore, there is no motivation to combine the references and the Examiner is clearly using inappropriate hindsight in using the present claim as a roadmap to combine references for which there is clearly no motivation to combine.

Even if the references were deemed to be properly combined, the combination does not render the invention as presently claimed obvious. For example, there is also no teaching or suggestion in the cited references for "a plurality of detectors each including a contaminant detection hazard detector for triggering a mail piece quarantine indication" as recited in claim 1. Claim 2 is patentable over the cited references for at least the same reason. Claims 3-8 are patentable over the cited references for at least the similar reason that there is no teaching or suggestion in the cited references for "testing the mail piece for hazards to determine an initial mail piece quarantine condition" as recited in claim 3.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to claims 1-8.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the invention as presently claimed in claims 1-17 is patentable over the cited references and in condition for allowance.

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8. Conclusion Of Remarks

Applicants submit that new claims 9-17 are patentable over the cited references.

For at least the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of this application are in condition for allowance and early and favorable action thereon is requested.

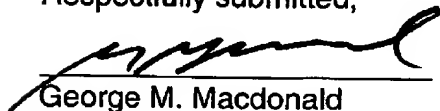
If the Examiner believes that additional issues may be resolved by a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned attorney for Applicant at (203) 924-3180.

9. Authorization

No fee is believed due with this Amendment. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for the response or credit any overpayment to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-442.

In the event that an extension of time or additional extension of time is required to make this response timely filed, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-442.

Respectfully submitted,



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